

VZCZCXYZ0002  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNO #0397 2981420  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 241420Z OCT 08  
FM USMISSION USNATO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2405  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB IMMEDIATE 5519  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/USNMR SHAPE BE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000397

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [HR](#)  
SUBJECT: CROATIA PRESENTS ITS ANNUAL NATIONAL PLAN AT NATO

Classified By: CDA Kate Byrnes. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On October 16, a senior-level Croatian delegation presented Zagreb's 2008-2009 Annual National Program to NATO Allies. The presentation drew praise from Allies in a warm and friendly meeting. Allies looked forward to Croatia becoming a full member of the Alliance. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On October 16, a Croatian delegation led by Ambassador Vladimir Matek, Acting Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Pier Simunovic, Director General at the Ministry of Defence, as well as Ambassador Igor Pokaz presented Zagreb's 2008-2009 Annual National Program to NATO's Senior Political Committee. This presentation was expected to be the Croatia's final Annual National Plan, with Croatia on schedule to formally join the Alliance as early as April 2009.

¶3. (C) Matek highlighted how far Croatia had come, proudly stating that he had also made the first presentation on a Croatian ANP to the Alliance. Matek noted his country had transformed from a security consumer to a security provider. He said Croatia contributes to peace and stabilization operations around the world, including as a part of NATO's ISAF operation in Afghanistan. He highlighted how important an effective public diplomacy campaign had been in raising domestic Croatian public support for NATO membership. Matek also reiterated Croatia's willingness to play a mentoring role for its neighbors on their path to NATO membership. In response to questioning from Allies the Croatian delegation underlined that MAP had been crucial to their success. According to the Croatian presenters MAP had "worked perfectly," and they "couldn't imagine how a country could have done it without MAP." Simunovic, on behalf of the Ministry of Defense reiterated Croatia's continued commitment to modernizing its armed forces and to providing adequate forces for operations. He noted the Croatian offer of helicopters and crews for use in KFOR.

¶4. A/DCM Reid noted that on September 25 the United States Senate had passed a resolution providing advice and consent to ratification of the NATO accession protocols for Croatia. He thanked Croatia for its continued participation in ISAF, including participation in four PRTs and for its contribution as the only non-NATO Ally embedded with and training the Afghan National Army through an OMLT. Reid encouraged Croatia to continue its judicial reform efforts, including efforts to reduce its case backlog and to improve training and supervision of judges and court administration. He also urged Croatia to amend its property restitution law so that it does not discriminate against current non-Croatian citizens who had property expropriated during World War Two and the communist regime.

¶5. (C) Comments from other Allies were almost uniformly positive in tone, welcoming Croatia into the Alliance and thanking it for contributions to operations (Hungary, Italy, Canada, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Germany, Lithuania, Greece, France, the Netherlands and Poland). Slovenia, the UK and Germany did observe that some challenges to the rule of law in Croatia remained, urging better performance. The Netherlands and the UK emphasized the importance of ICTY compliance. The Netherlands also encouraged Croatia to improve the independence of the civil service. Norway reminded Croatia that reform was a continual and never-ending process.

¶6. (U) An electronic copy of this Annual National Plan has been forwarded to EUR/RPM.  
BYRNES